

Town of Manchester
Water and Sewer Department
Interoffice Memorandum

DATE: April 4, 2011

TO: Judiciary Committee

FROM: Edward J. Soper, Administrator
Manchester Water Department

RE: HB-6557, AN ACT CONCERNING LIABILITY FOR THE
RECREATIONAL USE OF LANDS

The Town of Manchester encourages the adoption of the above-referenced legislation that would limit our Water Department's exposure to liability related to activities that are part of its passive recreation program.

The Water Department owns approximately 4,000 acres of pristine watershed where ratepayers and citizens can hike, explore, exercise and just relax; free-of-charge. Much of this acreage was obtained through the Open Space and Watershed Land Acquisition program(s). The permitted activities are passive in nature so not to cause erosion or cause other degradation to the purity of the water supply. The Water Department has developed and maintains a system of trails for this specific purpose. These trails are widely used by grateful participants on a daily basis.

The Water Department would like to continue to promote the passive recreation program. We are understandably concerned that the potential for large damage awards could limit or curtail the program our citizens currently enjoy. We therefore would like the same immunity that is afforded to private water companies and landholders who permit such activities on their property.

Thank you for this opportunity to express the stance on this important topic.